



Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Highways District 9

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Kentucky Department of Highways District 9 equipment operators take first place at state equipment ‘Roadeo’ competition

Three operators earn trophies, advance to nationals

FLEMINGSBURG, Ky. – Highway crew members in northeast Kentucky recently outscored backhoe, tractor, grader and snow plow operators from across the state to take first place in the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet’s Equipment “Roadeo” competition.

The annual Olympic-style Roadeo serves as a showcase of operators’ abilities while providing an opportunity to train and hone skills used every day in maintaining the Commonwealth’s highways.

At the state competition held Aug. 29-30, eleven operators from Kentucky Department of Highways District 9 competed in individual events that included driving courses and equipment challenges. Three took home trophies:

- James Hickerson of Fleming County placed first in the tandem-axle snow plow road obstacle course, which tests highway equipment operators’ skills in driving while operating a plow blade.
- Bryon Mitchell of Fleming County placed first in the backhoe competition, a timed precision maneuvering challenge in which operators use a hoe bucket to move a golf ball from a sand pit into a small container.
- Todd Plank of Rowan County placed first in the tractor mower competition for maneuvering a tractor with an attached mowing deck through an obstacle course and around tight turns, in forward and reverse.

Buoyed up by the three individual wins, the District 9 team scored enough points to secure the overall statewide first place team trophy – a travelling plaque that recognizes their proficiency in operating highway equipment.

“This competition challenges our equipment operators and puts them up against the best in the state,” said Chief District Engineer Bart Bryant. “Placing first is a recognition of

the tremendous skill and dedication we see each day as our crew members work to maintain the state's highways. We are proud of their accomplishment.”

Roadeos, which are open to any Transportation Cabinet employee who has a commercial driver's license, take place each summer in highway districts throughout Kentucky. Equipment operators compete among their peers in several skill contests, and participate in safety talks and other training. Top finishers at district level competitions then advance to state finals.

First place state winners – including Hickerson, Mitchell and Plank from District 9 – will compete this month in the national skills competition at the Southern Regional Equipment Operators Safety and Training Conference in Beckley, W.Va.



GROUP PHOTO: Kentucky Department of Highways District 9 crew members at the KYTC State Roadeo competition, from left: Bryon Mitchell of Fleming County, first place backhoe; James Hickerson of Fleming County, first place tandem snow plow; Ronnie Thompson of Fleming County; Todd Plank of Rowan County, first place tractor mower; Todd Myers of Nicholas County; bridge technician and district roadeo coordinator Rick Rogers holding District 9's first place overall plaque; Phillip Evans and Nick Clark of Nicholas County; and Addie Thomas and Garrett Lowe, Rowan County crewmen. Not pictured: Greg Shaffer of Carter County and Eddie Rice of Fleming County.